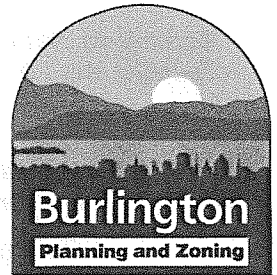


## Burlington Planning Commission

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*Peter Potts, Chair*  
*Bruce Baker, Vice-Chair*  
*Yves Bradley*  
*Lee Buffinton*  
*Andy Montroll*  
*Harris Roen*  
*Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur*  
*Vacant, Youth Member*



# Burlington Planning Commission Minutes

## REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 - 6:30 P.M.

### Conference Room #12, Ground Floor, City Hall

Present: P. Potts, A. Montroll, L. Buffinton, B. Baker, H. Roen  
Absent: J. Wallace-Brodeur, Y. Bradley  
Staff: S. Thibault, E. Tillotson

#### I. Agenda

No changes to the agenda.

#### II. Public Forum

P. Potts opened and closed the public forum at 6:38 pm.

#### III. Report of the Chair – Peter Potts, Chair

The Chair provided the following report:

- He will meet with Preservation Burlington on May 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss historic building materials, anticipating that this conversation will be helpful to the Planning Commission.
- He is working on the annual report.
- He will be leaving on vacation on May 7. Vice-Chair Baker will preside at the May 10 Commission meeting.

#### IV. Historic Building Materials Discussion

P. Potts - He welcomed Nancy Boone, State Architectural Historian. He had spoken with Ms Boone several weeks ago and felt that it would be helpful to the full Commission to have her perspective. The meeting tonight will be devoted to conversation and exploration, not decision. There will further be a meeting with the Planning & Zoning staff on May 10 to discuss local, state, and out of state approaches to historic building materials.

N. Boone – She spoke of the state register of historic places and how it relates to design. It was originally set up in Vermont by the 1975 Historic Preservation Act. It requires documentation and packaging for the local commission to use, and in Burlington there are approximately 4000 properties documented with thousands more eligible. Our City is proceeding to survey the historic buildings in a logical manner and orderly process during which the nominated buildings are reviewed to determine eligibility by a group of seven preservation experts at which time the building will be officially registered on the state historic register. Grant funding has paid for much of this process. In general the state register is an honorific way to recognize historic buildings or districts and contains buildings

deemed worthy of preservation although the recognition comes with no obligation to preserve, a little different from what is done in Burlington.

Federal or State ownership automatically triggers historic review except for one exception which is local historic design review. Twelve to fifteen communities in the state have this in place. Burlington does not. The communities determine which historic structures will be regulated through zoning. In Burlington, all historic structures are automatically regulated by zoning.

Other communities that have been concerned with protecting historic structures, Bennington being an example, produced a booklet documenting the variation in the various areas of the town, and broke down the historic character into neighborhoods, and published the document as a resource. In the booklet the evolution and retention of the characteristics of each neighborhood was incorporated into the zoning regulations taking into account the differences in the neighborhoods. Ms Boone brought some of the booklets from Bennington for the Planning Commission to examine and noted that CLG grants have funded studies and resources such as these booklets around the state. The collaboration with Preservation Burlington especially in relation to materials is a great idea. Burlington has been a leader in preservation.

H. Roen - The scale of the inventory in Burlington is a concern, a problem.

L. Buffinton - What works better, historic districts or eligibility districts?

N. Boone - It has to do with how people view the criteria to be met. It is easy to miss important buildings depending on when a neighborhood is surveyed. People react strongly to the idea of the state register.

L. Buffinton - Where historic districts exist, do all buildings have to comply? Whether they are non complying buildings or non contributing buildings?

N. Boone - Buildings in such districts are often treated in a different way depending upon whether they are contributing or not.

J. Tanguay - When there is federal money used for review are higher standards used? Higher than a community that wouldn't have any historic review at all.

N. Boone - The Secretary of the Interior Standards say keep features that are historic, repair with in kind materials, allow for additions, etc and are applied individually. The state register is a guideline for individual property which takes into account technical and economic considerations.

J. Tanguay - Are there any communities with built in incentives?

N. Boone - No, not in Vermont, some in other areas of the country.

A. Montroll - The challenge being on the state register is not a negative. The influence combining with zoning is a problem

N. Williams - Thousands of buildings haven't been looked at but we don't want to be overly rigid and say what you can do with your property.

N. Boone - When you look at a context it gives you a basis of what in particular you want to keep in a neighborhood, which could be different from what you want to keep in another neighborhood.

J. Weisgerber - How are other communities doing this?

N. Boone - Start with a survey.

M. Viens - Does your office provide a template for historic eligibility?

N. Boone - No, but we do know who does have. There is a step that adds local properties. Burlington City has always had to play catch up.

P. Potts - What does technical and economic feasibility mean/definition?

N. Boone - Anything could be, obviously not reasonable. Preservation of features being the best option

P. Potts - What about properties not surveyed?

N. Boone - Provide guidance, like Bennington, if a municipality is not surveyed, gather enough information. It is possible to look at general information to ascertain the genesis of neighborhoods, each sort of neighborhood has its story.

L. Buffinton - The Bennington booklet on page 83 gives examples of corrupted dwellings. Several neighborhoods in Burlington are unsurveyed and in danger, education is needed.

## **V. Regional Park and Ride Plan**

S. Thibault – She commented that to get the broad picture, it is helpful to read the executive summary. She had spoken with Nicole Losch, the bike transportation coordinator who had as yet not read the summary, but the plans are the same ones that they have been working on and working from and are carrying forward.

L. Buffinton - Are all the towns on board with the proposed plans?

H. Roen - Richmond doesn't wish to be the central park and ride area so they are unwilling to expand their park and ride facility until other communities in the county also provide some facilities.

P. Potts - The language is stronger in reference to the need for park and ride sites as opposed to the need for interceptor sites. Structured parking at the Gilbane site in the southern area of Burlington is specifically mentioned.

H. Roen - The plan is an amazing piece of work. Some assumptions are not correct; there is not enough emphasis on park and ride lots in Burlington.

## **VI. Downtown & Waterfront Plan – Contracts Approval**

P. Potts - Explained that the contract choice process and individual firms have been discussed with the Planning Commission Executive Committee.

S. Thibault - Spoke first about the Transportation contract. The range of bids from applicants varied from \$24000 to \$75000. There were a varied group of persons to examine the applications: Nicole Losch from DPW, Peter Keating, traffic analyst, L Kupferman, CEDO Director were some of the participants as well as herself and the Planning & Zoning Director, D. White. The choices were narrowed to the top three, and the search was further refined with more intense questioning and research. The choice is RSG, a large firm with a local branch that has worked fairly extensively with the City previously, and Victoria Transport Policy Institute specialty is parking analysis, so this seemed like the very best possible package.

**On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by L. Buffinton, the Commission approved the contract for the Transportation Study. A. Montroll abstained.**

S. Thibault – Spoke about the Retail and Real Estate Market Analysis review process which was very similar to the Transportation one.

**On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously approved the contract for the Retail and Real Estate Market Analysis.**

## **VII. Committee Reports**

- Ordinance committee meets next week
- Executive committee met last week, working on agendas through May and into June.
- Long Range Planning Committee met with Carol Weston from DPW who spoke.

**VIII. Commissioner Items**

There were no Commissioner items.

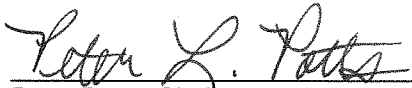
**IX. Minutes / Communications**

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously approved the March 22, 2011 minutes.

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously accepted the communications and placed them on file.

**X. Adjourn**

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously adjourned at 8:35pm.

  
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Peter Potts, Chairman

  
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Date

  
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Elsie Tillotson, Recording Secretary